

U.S. to Seek 'Hot Lines' With Allies

6/2/65
Network in NATO

Viewed as Vital for
Fast Consultation

By Howard Margolis
Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States is prepared to propose to its European allies the establishment of an intricate net of "hot lines" that would allow instantaneous consultations among the leading NATO capitals in crisis situations.

The scheme would be similar to the widely publicized Moscow-Washington hot line established last year, and to less publicized hot lines already operating between Washington and several European capitals.

It would essentially augment this system by adding one or more lines and by cross-linking the lines to permit conference calls among the chiefs of government.

Proposed at Paris

Such a set of hot-line links was described by officials here as one of the objectives of the four- or five-power defense ministers' committee proposed by the United States at the NATO meeting in Paris over the weekend.

According to officials, the purpose of the links would be to follow through on the guidelines for the use of nuclear weapons adopted at the Athens NATO meeting three years ago.

Under those guidelines, officials said, the allies agreed that there should be an immediate NATO response, without consultations, to any nuclear attack on a member of the alliance.

This, in effect, means that the U.S. President is authorized in advance to release NATO nuclear weapons to military commanders in those circumstances.

But in the event of a non-nuclear attack, the guidelines called for consultations among the allies before nuclear weapons were to be used.

No Provision Made

Nothing, however, has been done to provide the rapid secure arrangements for consultations that might be required to follow through on the guidelines.

The U.S. idea, consequently, is viewed by U.S. officials as the kind of useful step that can be taken within NATO without bringing up the sharp divisions, particularly between France and the United States about basic alliance strategy.

France has, in general, resisted the sort of coordination and planning sessions the U.S. has been urging. She has argued that the Alliance ought to deal first with basic strategy and then worry about details.